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ABSTRACT

This paper argues that a value structure must be developed and taught in the schools. The values and principles contained in the Humanistic Manifesto II are examined in the context of current adolescent literature. Discussed are such books as "It's Not What You Expect" and "Mom, The Wolfman and Me" by Norma Klein; "First Person Singular" by Vida Demas; "For All the Wrong Reasons" by John Neufield; "A Single Girl" by Mary Danby; "One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest" by Ken Kesey; "I Never Promised You A Rose Garden" by Joanne Greenberg; "The Bell Jar" by Sylvia Plath; and "Run Shelley, Run" by Gertrude Samuel. The author agrues that books such as these, which incorporate humanistic values, can best prepare today's students for the coming humanistic century. (TS)

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USING ADOLESCENT FICTION THAT DEALS WITH CURRENT PROBLEMS AND LIFESTYLES TO EXPLORE CONTEMPORARY VALUES

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by
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Something wonderful, free, unheralded, and of significance to all humanists, is happening in the secondary schools. It is the adolescent literature movement, virtually non-existent ten years ago, but now, of so much importance, that courses in Adolescent Literature are de rigeur for the training of English teachers, libraraains, and reading specialists. They may burn Slaughterhouse Five in North Dakota and ban a number of innocuous books in Kanawha County, but thank god the crazies don't do all that much reading. If they did, they'd find out that they have already been defeated Adolescent literature has opened Pandora's box and made it impossible to lie to young people anymore.

Perhaps the most remarkable aspect of adolescent literature is that it makes an attempt to deal honestly with aspects of real life which, in the past, could be learned and discussed only outside of school, and often, not even there. Adolescent literature gives readers the opportunity to discover themselves, to see themselves in their present and future roles, to find a common humanity through the knowledge that others have encountered problems similar to their own in coming of age. Nothing that is part of contemporary life is taboo in this genre, and any valid piece of writing which helps to make the world more knowable to young people, serves an important humanistic function. Adolescent literature confronts the truth. The method for dealing with it is discussion, and from free discussion of matters of real significance, the student is helped to develop a value structure.

The reason why a value structure must be developed in the schools is perfectly simple to me, though to many people it is a debatable question. It must be developed in the schools because that is the only place where we can grab people while they are in a tender, formative stage, and if we don't teach values in the school, we willingl abdicate to television, the Reverend Moon, and the ad agencies.

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A recent article in The New York Times, "Americans Debate the Role of Schools," discussing the "critical" function of the schools states: "Education in a democratic society involves the free exploration of ideas -- including new and disturbing ones -- and school boards and legislatures constantly find themselves in the position of setting up and financing institutions that by their very nature cannot be completely controlled." The article discusses, specifically, the decision by three New Jersey school boards, Montclair, Westfield, and Mahwah, to stop using "Man: A Course of Study," a fifth-grade social studies curriculum because "it gets students involved in discussing basic--and to many adults upsetting--questions such as whether medical, educational, and other gains registered by modern society have not been achieved at the cost of social benefits such as family and community cohesion."

I, myself, am not sure that fifth-graders can discuss questions such as this with any complexity or depth, but these are exactly the kinds of questions which should be discussed in the secondary school. Lawrence Cremin, the president of Teachers College, cautiously affirming the necessity for the schools to deal with important ideas that lead to development of a value structure, is quoted in this same article as saying: "In a democratic society, the schools must constantly exist in tension with the powers that be....They must confirm the order in which they exist, yet they must criticize it. Like churches and the press, they cannot go too far, or society will kill them off. Yet if the tension disappears, we know that certain things will fail to happen that a free society desperately needs." (1)

Of course, Cremin, here, is playing things as cozily safe as befits his leadership of Teachers College. I mean, what is "too far," and is "too far" in Kanawha County the same as "too far" in Miami Beach, Short Hills, Scarsdale or Great Neck. Nevertheless, I do approve of his recognition that it is the schools that must evaluate and perform this "critical" function for the society in which they operate, for it is through this performance of the "critical" function that the value structure is developed.

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1. Edward B. Fiske, "Americans Debate the Role of Schools," The New York Times, Sunday, November 16, 1975.

What value structures? Whose value structure? Aren't there many value structures of equal "value"? Not to me there aren't. The value structure I expouse, want to teach through adolescent literature, and want to see become the cornerstone of school thinking and behavior, is contained in the Humanist Manifesto II. What is this Manifesto and where may you eager disciples, taking down every second word I utter, obtain this manifesto tomorrow?

The Humanist Manifesto II, published in The Humanist, September/October 1973, is a recent statement by a group of leading humanists embodying their vision for the twenty-first century, which they sat, can be and should be the humanist century. This manifesto is intended to be the affirmation of a set of common principles that can serve as a basis for united action -- "positive principles relevant to the present human condition. They are a design for a secular society on a planetary scale."

What I propose to do today is to examine with you some of the principles of this manifesto and examine how the values espoused exist or do not exist in current adolescent literature. First, let us look at the sixth principle of the manifesto:

> In the area of sexuality, we believe that intolerant attitudes, often cultivated by orthodox religions and puritanical cultures, unduly repress sexual conduct. The right to birth control, abortion, and divorce should be recognized. While we do not approve of exploitive, denigrating forms of sexual expression, neither do we wish to prohibit, by law or social sanction, sexual behavior between consenting adults. The many varieties of sexual exploration should not in themselves be considered "evil." Without countenancing mindless permissiveness or unbridled promiscuity, a civilized society should be a tolerant one. Short of harming others or compelling them to do likewise, individuals should be permitted to express their sexual proclivities and pursue their life-styles as they desire. We wish to cultivate the development of a responsible attitude toward sexuality, in which humans are not exploited as sexual objects, and in which intimacy, sensitivity, respect, and honesty in interpersonal relations are encouraged. Moral education for children and adults is an important way of developing awareness and sexual maturity.

Much of the good new adolescent literature has the values described above as an inherent part of characterization. Students now encountering these works have no idea of how different things were before their dates of birth. To illustrate, Carol Eisen Rinzler, in an article in The New York Times Book Review, May 4, 1975, entitled "Talking About the Untalkable," reminds us of what the past was like:

> Finding out about sex was a little like trying to reconstruct a lost civilization from potsherds and relics. You took overheard conversations, scenes from movies (sneaking into "From Here to Eternity" and "The Moon is Blue" rank among my more cherished childhood memories) and, of course, books, put them all together and you arrived--presumably before you found out empirically--at what sex was all about....
> ...Until I read "Catcher in the Rye," I was convinced that someone had slipped up somewhere and science-fiction was the only form of literature into which people like me fit.....(P.25)

Today's adolescents have no need to search for models of sexuality in science fiction, no need to think that their basic needs and desires are the slightest bit unusual. Teenagers can find through contemporary books one of the most precious gifts society can confer on its members; the gift of acceptance. One of the best new exponents of this acceptance is Norma Klein, an intelligent writer who, unpretentiously, presents these humanistic attitudes toward sexuality. Her heroines are intelligent, rational, and believable.

It's Not What You Expect (Avon, 1974, 95¢, 128 pp.) is told from the point of view of Carla, a fourteen-year-old twin of her brother Oliver's, who spends the summer of her parents' separation, running a restaurant with her brother and attempting to understand herself, her family, and the meaning of love, sex, and marriage. The note of rationality which pervades the learning experiences in this book, give it particular value.

Dad goes off to the city, lives alone in an apartment, and has a new girl friend. At the end of the summer, when he returns, Mom takes him back without anger or martyrdom. When Carla asks her, "why is Dad coming back?", Mom, able to see beyond Dad's temporary girl friend to the deeper needs and malaise of the man, tells Carla, "some people manage to find a job, a profession that they really love, that satisfies them in every way. Or they don't but they don't care. Well, Dad does care only he never quite...he always wanted to do more." (p. 124). The Humanist Manifesto says, "a civilized society should be a tolerant one," and that is exactly what we can say about Mom, that she is tolerant and civilized.

This humanistic acceptance is also shown in the twins' attitude toward the pregnancy of Sara Lee, the girl friend of their older brother, Ralph.

When Oliver tells Carla that Sara Lee is pregnant, Carla asks: "how can that be... I mean... like, isn't she on the pill or something." (p. 89). This statement tickles me. When I was a girl, the initial words, "how can that be?" would be followed by "she isn't married."

Then, the following conversation occurs which is delicious to those of us who were brought up on the sexuality of Nancy Drew and Judy Bolton:

Carla asks her brother:

> "What's going to happen, then?
> "She'll have an abortion, I guess."
> "Done by who?"
> "Well, as a matter of fact, when you burst in on us this evening, I was just telling her...there's this article in Consumer Reports I read a couple of months ago that tells the whole spiel and it's not that expensive--safe, recommended doctors, etc."
> "Well, so it shouldn't be a trauma, anyway." (p. 90)

The marvelous thing is that it isn't a trauma for anyone. Carla goes to visit Sara Lee, the day after the abortion, and finds her calmly doing gourmet cooking in the kitchen with her mother. Carla says:

> I kept looking at Sara Lee. She looked so calm and composed. Of course, why shouldn't she be? It's only in old-time movies that people lie around pale and fainting after abortions. Still, it was odd to think of....Maybe if Sara Lee and Ralph were to break up this year, the abortion would seem significant. But if, as is likely, they keep on going together, get married, and finally have a bunch of kids, I guess no one will even remember this or care about it. It's odd. (pp. 112-113)

Klein also expresses this value, that a civilized society should be a tolerant one, Mom, The Wolfman and Me (Avon, 1974, 156 pp., 95¢). Mom is a self-supporting freelance photographer who had no interest in marrying Brett's father, and she isn't the slightest bit ashamed or embarrassed by this fact. Neither is Brett. She says:

> ...The funny thing is that I can't imagine Mom with a husband. I don't know why that is. I mean, I can imagine me with a father but not her with a husband. I guess because for me to have a father, I wouldn't have to be any different. But for her to have a husband, I guess she would have to stop wearing blue jeans and having her hair in a pony tail and have to do more regular things. The other thing is that I don't think Mom would want a husband...(p. 40)

When Brett's mother meets a man called The Wolf Man, because his dog looks like a wolf, Brett is as casual about her mother's new romance as they both are about her unmarried condition. Note the relaxed way in which she refers to her mother's affair:

> For the next month or so, The Wolf Man slept over on Saturday night almost all the time, and sometimes he came for dinner during the week. (p. 137)

Mom finally marries the Wolfman -- reluctantly. She says, "Oh, it's awful... giving in to convention like this. Why did I let the two of you convince me to go ahead with it?" (p. 153)

Vida Demas' First Person Singular (Dell, 1974, 219 pp., 95¢) was deservedly on the ALA's list of Best Young Adult Books for 1974. This book deals with the problems of a young girl who wants to be herself but is constantly beaten down by the combined forces of home, school, and society. Sex is not a problem here. Growth, identity, and survival as an authentic person are the problems. In fact, sex with Greg, another high school student who is as much of a loner as she is, is seen as one of the few positive experiences in her life. They meet at a group picnic, smoke grass, and then casually make love:

> "Pam," he whispered, "you can't be a virgin, can you?"
> "Yes, I am, "I whispered back. God, I was ashamed of it.
> "Unbelievable," he said, "How can you stand it?"
> "I can't," I said. (p. 52)

And this friendly interchange takes care of the problem of virginity. The next day, Pam does not refer to this experience with any of the traditional cliches. She is neither guilty nor exalter. In fact, she hardly has time to think about the experience because all of her energies are taken up with a test in school the next day, a test which, ironically, presents the vast gap between what is taught in school and what is happening in the real lives of these seventh-graders. The test asks: "Describe in detail, the important flora and fauna of Brazil, past and present, explaining their relation to the commerce of the country. (p. 55)

But all during eighth grade Pam and Greg make love and with him, Pam finds the completeness that still can come only through the giving and taking of love. She says:

> But, oh, with Greg I was perfect, all hallowed out and formed at last with the shape of me known and real and complete. And it was so marvelous, for we could talk, although I didn't say much, just listened, and he was into a new thing -- experience -- and willingly I studied a new vocabulary of many strange and amazing words. Listening, as he asserted his independence, I asserted my dependence. (p. 58)

The Humanist Manifesto, says, in this item on sexuality, "We wish to cultivate the development of a responsible attitude toward sexuality, in which humans are not exploited as sexual objects, and in which intimacy, sensitivity, respect, and honesty in interpersonal relations are encouraged." This statement is true of all of the above books but, unfortunately, it is not true of all adolescent literature books coming out today. Perhaps the difference is that the books discussed above are by women and the ones I will now discuss are by men, but I would not like to make that generalization at this time.

For All the Wrong Reasons by John Neufeld (Signet, 1973, 220 pp., $1.25) is a book which pretends to contemporaneity but says or implies many non-humanistic things about sexuality, starting, perhaps, at that traditional stance that when the heroine gets pregnant, the honorable young man will marry her. The point must be made here that I would not consider a book non-humanistic if it depicted certain existing attitudes but you could clearly feel author disapproval behind them. For example, Huckleberry Finn, describes non-humanistic attitudes toward slaves, but it is made evident to the reader that both Mark Twain and Huck Finn do not agree with or approve of these ideas. This is not the case in the Neufeld book. Here are some excerpts from the scene in which Tish tells Peter that she is pregnant (it must be remembered that they are seventeen and eighteen years old). Tish says:

> "I've had a couple of weeks to look at it in every light. Sara and Hank are lining up a doctor for me." (p. 37)

Peter replies: "...you have to have the baby....It's my child. I want to see whether I'm any good at this." (p. 37)

He is determined to give up Harvard or Yale and to become a husband and father even though he is not really in love. He says: "The first thing to understand is that I'd like to marry you. I might even have fallen in love without this little push. With it, loving's a necessity....We don't have to get married. We want to. You don't have to have the child. I want you to." (p. 38)

Throughout this, Tish who was previously quite well reconciled to the idea of having an abortion, seems to have no volition. It is Peter who has the choice of whether or not to marry her.

He has not only impregnated Tish -- he has made her stupid. And Neufeld, in contrast to his readers, seems to be there applauding as Peter admonishes Tish: "there are such things as responsibility, too, you know. And things like duty and honor, and cherishing each other. They must be as important, more even, than giving up those things." (p. 38)

And what is Tish's response to these high-flown masculine sentiments? "That scares me, Peter," she says. It is evident right from the beginning that Tish's attitude is the more logical, more practical, more humanistic one. She and Peter are not in love, they can spare both families such sadness, and they can avoid bringing an unwanted baby into the world. Instead, Tish succumbs to the following marriage proposal: "We like each other, right?" he asked. We understood each other, from the very beginning. We have fun together. We're good in bed together. And now we have a common concern. I'd say that was a lot to start marriage with." (pp.39-40)

When Tish still demurs saying: "It's not such a big thing," Peter replies, "You sound like Lieutenant Calley....It's one of the biggest." (p. 40) What a comparison, comparing an abortion with the handiwork of Lieutenant Calley. Then Peter says, "Tish, I want to do this....Will you marry me?" Tish replies: "Well, if you're going to ask me, I guess I'll have to...." (p. 40)

Of course, I consider this entire book dishonest and destructive to the value structure I'd like to see espoused in the schools. But here is another specific example which occurs soon after Tish meets Peter. She writes in her diary:

> Surprise of the year. He's moral. To a point! That point is that he doesn't want to do "it" around a lot of other people. He says it's something that's private and personal and between two people only. He doesn't want to be part of a circus...a sideshow. I admit I was not disappointed...No one likes a smart-ass, says Peter. I agree. I don't like myself that way either. But he was able, happily, thank God, to overlook my little failings...no doubt in part because of my tits....How nice it would have been...to be able to leave the go home, and go to bed...with him. Sort of easy and natural and well-adjusted... Because it's important (posterity wise) here's where we are at the moment. We necked like crazy last night. I let him feel me, and I liked it. It's quite different with someone you really like, believe me, my children. He has soft, enormous hands....I was oddly proud. I almost wanted people to see what we were doing....Incidentally, I was pretty busy with my hands, too. I mean, it wasn't all one-sided with me as your usual type of sex-object....my hands were under his sweater, and his shirt, and I am here to say his skin is fantastic! Wow." (pp.12-13)

One final word about this book. They get married and Tish, in the steotypical role of the housewife, sits home all day with nothing to do and gets angry at Peter when he stays out late. Peter, impatiently, tells her, "I can't help what suspicions you have. You can spend all day manufacturing scenes and getting jealous.... Either take what I say as true, accept me as I am, or check out." (p. 110)

And how does this couple make up? Again, in the very way that goes counter to humanistic values. "She was lowered gently across Peter's body, as he bent over her, still kissing her deeply and steadily. The hardness she felt at her back, from between Peter's legs, reminded her of her triumph." (p. 110). My god! Her entire life has been messed up by this egocentric male and she thinks his erection is her triumph. Not a sign of love, of caring, of sensitivity, of affection -- but a "triumph." I wouldn't want young people to learn the beauty of sexuality from a book like this.

Another book with confused, non-humanistic sexual values is Mary Danby's, A Single Girl (Dell, 1974, At first, the reader is lulled into thinking that Danby disapproves of the non-humanistic sexual mores of the past. It seems that she disagrees when her heroine states:

> From my earliest years, I had been discouraged from having any ideas about pre-marital sex. Nice girls keep themselves for their husbands.' 'Men don't respect you if they know you're not a virgin.' 'Girls who sleep around may have lots of boyfriends, but nobody wants to marry secondhand goods.' There were expressions like 'private parts,' 'violation,' 'unsullied purity,' 'animal desires,' 'dirty thoughts.' All of these things combined to build a barrier which could not be broken down overnight. (pp. 46-47)

When Jane's fiance is killed in Vietnam, she plunges into a different single girl world--not the world of the single girl waiting to get married, not the pure, hopeful, picture-book world--but the permissive world of the single girl swinger. It is at this point that we find that the author really endorses the sexual mores of the past. Poor, dumb Jane exemplifies an idea that was current in my youth. That is, the idea that once you do "it" you lose the right of choice, become addicted, and do "it" with anyone who asks you.

Jane sleeps with a variety of men and likes none of them. Concomitant with this pattern are other "naughties." She smokes marijuana, takes LSD, and engages in a gang bang. Her punishment for freedom is pregnancy. Does she decide to have the baby? You bet she does. Why? Because abortion is for hippies, for the kind of liberated single girl she does not want to be.

And God rewards her for returning to her rightful roots. Her dead fiance's war buddy brings her his medals, and, as we might have predicted, marries this plucky, "moral" girl and cheerfully takes on the burden of fatherhood. What brought about his love and decision to make an honest woman of her was her noble decision not to have an abortion. That noble decision has wiped out all of her past sins, made her whole again, and brought her the ultimate reward -- a marriage proposal.

Let us look now at another set of principles from the Humanist Manifesto II, those principles which are listed under the number eleven. This eleventh area states:

> The principle of moral equality must be furthered through elimination of all discrimination based upon race, religion, sex, age, or national origin. This means equality of opportunity and recognition of talent and merit. Individuals should be encouraged to contribute to their own betterment. If unable, then society should provide means to satisfy their basic economic, health, and cultural needs, including, wherever resources make possible, a minimum guaranteed annual income. We are concerned for the welfare of the aged, the infirm, the disadvantaged, and also for the outcasts--the mentally retarded, abandoned or abused children, the handicapped, prisoners, and addicts--for all who are neglected or ignored by society. Practicing humanists should make it their vocation to humanize personal relations.

Much recent adolescent literature deals with the despised, the aged, the infirm, the disadvantaged, the outcasts. The best of these works take the reader beyond the level of his own awareness into involvement with a broader spectrum of society. In the same way that most Americans can go through life never encountering people of different races, many also go through life insulated against the unfortunate and despised, and it is the lack of information that permits injustice to continue. Adolescent literature can help to combat this insularity and can take the reader away from Dick and Jane into a real world with people with real problems.

Let us look first, at one category of outsider, the mentally ill. We have always regarded the mentally ill with distaste, with disgust, with blame, and our dominant emotion toward them, because they disturbed the desired homogenity of our

society, was to either burn or hang them as witches or to sweep them under the rug, to shut them away so that they could not destroy the Norman Rockwell super-wasp symmetry which was the rainbow reward at the end of the melting pot.

How have recent adolescent novels about mental illness reflected humanistic principles? Well, to begin with, they have said that recovery is possible with proper love and care, that many inmates are badly treated, and that the reader should be interested in these matters because the mental institution is, in microcosm, our entire society, and that our treatment of the despised does not affect only those inside the institution, but those outside as well.

Ken Kesey's novel, One Flew Over the Cuckoos Nest, depicts society as a Combine of negative powerful forces which include the nurses and doctors in the hospital. The Combines go beyond the hospital to join with those forces that have killed freedom in America, sexual freedom, the freedom to laugh, the freedom of the American Indian, etc. Kesey is telling the reader about the dangers of such institutions, about the further destruction of already sick inmates through lobotomy, group therapy, and shock treatment, and about his belief that such things need not be. Kesey believes that even the sickest patients can be returned to life through good fellowship, love, belief, patience, sympathy, sexuality and the power of laughter.

Kesey also poses the humanistic question -- who is sane?; those commited to institutions or those who are free and committed to the destruction of the powerless; those non-conformists who want to live in freedom, apart from society's castrating rules, or those who are obsessive-compulsive and spend their lives carrying out the rules of a repressive Combine.

In Joanne Greenberg's I Never Promised You A Rose Garden (Signet, 1964, 225 pp.) another adolescent literature classic, Greenberg shows us that there are helpful, caring, healthy human beings who are willing to use their talents and love to bring people back to sanity. Dr. Fried, the analyst in this novel, the epitome of humanism, is a loving, intelligent, constructive woman who insists on her teenage patient, Deborah's, ability to participate in her own redemption and who tells her, "I never promised you a rose garden", but shows that life, freedom and functioning even in a

less than perfect world, are goals to be desired. One of the significant values in this book is the idea that even at the lowest depths of insanity, a human being still has some modicum of free will which he can exercise to assist in his own recovery.

Another work which is remarkably similar to I Never Promised You A Rose Garden is the non-fiction novel, Autobiography of a Schizophrenic Girl (Anonymous, New American Library, 1968, 123 pp., 75¢). Frank Conroy, author of Stop-Time, has written a Foreword to this book which shows the value to others of this material about outcasts. Conroy writes:

> Renee's courage inspired me....She wrote her book very soon after her cure, imaginatively re-entering a world of which she had been terribly afraid. My own fears of reliving what had been a chaotic, frightening and confusing childhood seemed, after her example, fears I could not allow myself. She had faced her large demons; I would face my small ones.

Conroy discusses Renee's experiences as an affirmation of the entire field of literature because of one person's writing something down in order to communicate with others of his kind. He adds:

> ...the book moved me because it was so clearly a triumph of faith, of faith in the act of writing. Beset by all sorts of difficulties....she nonetheless went on to write the book, giving us the sensations of schizophrenic more vividly and I suspect more honesty than anything I've read. As a human document, Renee' book is without doubt inspirational, but I am even more struck with it as an astonishing tour de force of prose. She had faith in words, believing in their ability to carry inexpressible messages, trusting that what cannot be said can somehow be borne aloft by what is said....(Foreword)

John Neufeld's, Lisa Bright and Dark (Signet, 1970, 143 pp., 75¢) deals with mental illness on a more simple level. Lisa Shilling, aged sixteen, feels she is losing her mind but her parents refuse to believe that a child of theirs could be mentally ill. Only Lisa's friends, who had read some psychology books, are able to give her the love, warmth, acceptance and compassion which will enable her to regain her mental health. The story is not really believable but the humanistic attitudes in it are just fine. Three healthy teenagers transcend themselves to help their friend regain her health.

Mary McCracken's, A Circle of Children (Signet, 221 pp., $1.50) listed on the American Library Association's list of Best Books for Young Adults, 1974, describes how mentally ill children can be helped in a constructive, therapeutic school

situation.

When I first found this book on the ALA list, I thought it an unusual choice. I wondered if young people would be interested in this true story of how a suburban Junior Leaguer left her husband after her children had grown up and left for school, and had found the meaning of her life through dedicated teaching of emotionally disturbed children. After I had read it, I could share the librarian's enthusiasm. This book is all about concern for outcasts. Ms. McCracken herself symbolizes the search for humanistic values, for she had the economic best this society has to offer and yet found life lacking significance. This woman who needed to serve the less fortunate rather than to continue to live a life of empty consumerism, is an excellent role model for adolescents. Her attitude, and that of her colleagues toward their mentally ill charges, shows clearly the humanistic way in which deviants can be treated.

Sylvia Plath's The Bell Jar (Bantam, 1972, 216 pp., $1.50) is both a plea for different ways of handling mental patients and a more generalized, humanistic plea for the acceptance of diversity in the fulfillment of male-female role models, for it is Esther, the heroine's, feelings of being different, of being an outsider, of being unable to function as a female housewife and clothes horse, that ultimately result in her emotional breakdown.

The therapist to whom her mother takes her, is unable, himself, to understand a different kind of eighteen-year-old. Esther writes:

> Doctor Gordon's features were so perfect he was almost pretty.
> I hated him the minute I walked in through the door.
> I had imagined a kind, ugly, intuitive man looking up and saying "Ah!" in an encouraging way, as if he could see something I couldn't, and then I would find words to tell him how I was so scared, as if I were being stuffed farther and farther into a black, airless sack with no way out....
> And then, I thought, he would help me, step by step, to be myself again.
> But Doctor Gordon wasn't like that at all. He was young and good-looking, and I could see right away he was conceited. (p. 105)

Doctor Gordon only succeeds in making Esther feel more like an outsider. On his desk, he has a photograph, in a silver frame, of his beautiful wife and two beautiful blond children. The sight of the photograph makes her furious:

> And then I thought, how could this Doctor Gordon help me anyway, with a beautiful wife and beautiful children and a beautiful dog haloing him like the angels on a Christmas card? (p. 106)

Doctor Gordon takes the easy way out and gives Esther shock treatment. The shock treatment continues to deepend her feelings of alienation and leads to her suicide attempt, the ultimate gesture of an outsider, and then to her incarseration in a mental institution.

The book ends on a fine humanistic note, similar to that of I Never Promised You A Rose Garden. Esther goes to the funeral of her friend, Joan, another inmate who has hung herself. Esther says: "I took a deep breath and listened to the old brag of my heart. I am, I am, I am." (p. 199) No more wonderful message than this can be given to young people. One can descend to the depths of hell and rise again to shout, "I am."

Item eleven of the Humanist Manifesto II also refers to abused children, the handicapped, presioners, and addicts. Books about these categories of people have also entered the field of adolescent literature. One such outcast is designated as PINS, "Persons in Need of Supervision." Many young people are institutionalized for no other crime than that of running away from destructive families, playing truant from school, or because of family neglect. They thus suffer a compounded victimization.

Gertrude Samuel's, Run Shelley, Run (Signet, 1974, 159 pp., $1.25) is the story of one such girl, and is based on the research of Gertrude Samuels, a staff writer and photographer for The New York Times, who has covered the subject of juvenile justice in courts throughout the United States.

When young people become categorized as PINS, they automatically become outcasts:

> Some girls had committed the "crime" of being deserted by their parents, and the courts had nowhere to put them. Some girls were drug users and prostitutes Many were runaways or truants, or preferred sleeping around to sleeping at home. (p. 11)

Shelley is institutionalized because her alcoholic mother has remarried a brute man who doesn't want Shelley in their hom after she complains to her mother about hi sexual advances to her. Each time Shelley is imprisoned, she runs away and each ti

she runs, time is added to her sentence until she is finally doomed to endure mistreatment and incarceration until the age of eighteen. Shelley is mocked and tormented by her peers in school and in the streets, who cannot have the insight given to the reader:

> Shelley never knew her own father. She was, by the age of ten, left to play on the street after school, till Mama got home from work. Late at night very often, too. The cops and Welfare investigator reported that Mama was an alcoholic. They warned Mama, in front of Shelley, to give up the bottle if she didn't want to give up Shelley. (pp. 23-24)

The poignance of this book is found in the beauty of the young child, in her wonderful possibilities, and in the destruction of these possibilities through the systematic brutalization of society:

> At ten, Shelley wanted desperately to do four things: to write a book, because she wasn't named for a great poet for nothing; to become a nurse; to grow a tree in the backyard of their house on West Eighty-Fourth Street; to wean Mama from the bottle. Of the four, the tree seemed the easiest to realize. (p. 24)

By the end of the book, Shelley has been gang raped, forced to endure lesbian advances in prison, shackled and placed endlessly in solitary confinement because of her attempts to escape. The judge who finally has Shelley released (and now many more young people are still in conditions like these?), finds her, at the age of sixteen, in solitary confinement:

> Wall was that the five-by-eight-foot rectangular, barred cell, stripped of furniture and adornments, had plenty of. It was made of grayish cinder block; the floor was bare; there was not even a bed or cot. A pinewood platform extending from a side wall served as bed and desk and chair. The platform had no mattress or blankets, and no pillow (to preclude destruction) during the day; two blankets were provided at night. No books or reading matter allowed. No writing allowed. No clothes --other than the pajamas in which she was transferred. Nothing to hear or listen to, except perhaps the sound of a girl's voice--her own. (p. 124)

Shelley's release from prison doesn't automatically end her problems. Her peers treat her like a freak and she finds that during her years of incarceration she had fallen so far behind her peers "that she had to go into remedial classes for all ages." (p. 148) She finds it hard to be an outcast still, but the book ends on a note of hope and Samuels leads the reader to believe that despite the horrors she has experienced, Shelley can become a happy and constructive member of society because of the love and humanism of the judge who frees her and of a kindly neighbor.

Summary

During this past year, we have heard much about the necessity to go "back to basics," and generally these basics are defined as the three "R's". I regard those areas as skills but not as "basics." To me, what is basic, is that our young people develop a system of values for the era ahead.

Besides, even if we accept the fact that the basics were once taught more and better, we must look at those basics in the context of what was happening historically while people learned the basic skills. It is a cliche by now to say that both Japan and Germany were highly literate societies. And it took people in our society with a good grasp of basics to develop weapons for the Vietnam War such as antipersonnel bombs, napalm, and nerve gas. I am certain that these industries never employed dummies without the basic skills.

Paul Kurtz in his introduction to the Humanist Manifesto II reminds us:

> It is forty years since the Humanist Manifesto I (1933) appeared. Events since then make that earlier statement seem far too optimistic. Nazism has shown the depths of brutality of which humanity is capable. Other totalitarian regimes have suppressed human rights without ending poverty. Science has sometimes brought evil as well as good. Recent decades have shown that inhuman wars can be made in the name of peace. The beginnings of police states, even in democratic societies, widespread government espionage, and other abuses of power by military, political, and industrial elites, and continuance of unyielding racism, all present a different and difficult social outlook. In various societies, the demands of women and minority groups for equal rights effectively challenge our generation. As we approach the twenty-first century, however, an affirmative and hopeful vision is needed. Faith, commensurate with advancing knowledge, is also necessary....The next century can be and should be the humanistic century.

It is my belief that with the use of adolescent literature that incorporates humanistic values, we can best prepare today's students for the coming humanistic century.